



UPDATE

March/April 2016

A bi-monthly newsletter for Veterans served by the St. Cloud VA Health Care System, and for those who serve Veterans. Send news items and comments to St. Cloud VA Health Care System, Attn: Public Affairs Officer, 4801 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud, MN 56303, or via email to Barry.Venable@va.gov

TRUE or FALSE?

Colorectal cancer is the 2nd leading cancer killer.	Both men and women get colorectal cancer.	Colorectal cancer often starts with no symptoms.	Screening helps prevent colorectal cancer.
<input checked="" type="radio"/> TRUE <input type="radio"/> FALSE	<input checked="" type="radio"/> TRUE <input type="radio"/> FALSE	<input checked="" type="radio"/> TRUE <input type="radio"/> FALSE	<input checked="" type="radio"/> TRUE <input type="radio"/> FALSE

March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month.
Learn more at www.cdc.gov/screenforlife

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Updates at: www.stcloud.va.gov

HONORING SERVICE
EMPOWERING
HEALTH

Calendar of Events

Tuesday, March 1 (9-10 a.m.); Wednesday, March 16 (6-7 p.m.); or Wednesday, March 23 (2-3 p.m.)—**VA Caregiver Support Line**. Free education and support for Caregivers—right from your home phone! Topic for March is *Tempering the Tyrant: Finding Anger's Rightful Place*. To register, call Jessica Behrends at 320-252-1670, ext. 7283.

Tuesday, March 1 & April 5 (Noon-1 p.m.)—**VA Caregiver Support Group** at the St. Cloud VA in Building 29, Room 20C, and Brainerd VA Clinic via Vtel. Support group for family Caregivers of Veterans from all eras. Contact Jessica Behrends at 320-252-1670, ext. 7283, for more information.

Tuesday, March 1 & 15; April 5 & 19 (Noon-2 p.m.)—**Veterans Law Clinic** at the St. Cloud VA in Building 28, Room 126. Free legal consultation for Veterans for Social Security Law, Housing, Consumer, Child Support, Family Law, and Employment. No criminal law issues will be discussed. Please call 320-253-0138 or 1-800-622-7773 to schedule an appointment.

Saturday, March 5 (9 a.m.-3 p.m.)—**5th Annual Central MN Wellness Expo**, River's Edge Convention Center, 10 4th Ave. South, St. Cloud, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to discuss health care services and eligibility.

Monday, March 7 & April 4 (9:10-9:30 a.m.)—Listen to the **Veterans Affairs Radio Show** on KNSI AM 1450/FM 103.3.

Fridays, March 11-May 27 (11 a.m.-noon)—**Health Focus Fridays**, St. Cloud VA, Building 29, Room 20-D. Learn creative strategies to improve your health and well-being! All Veterans served by the St. Cloud VA are welcome. NO appointment is needed. Veterans may select the classes they want to attend, but please call 320-252-1670, ext. 7531, to sign up. See page 5 of this publication for a list of wellness topics and dates.

Friday, March 11 (noon-8 p.m.); Saturday, March 12 (9 a.m.-7 p.m.); Sunday, March 13 (10 a.m.-4 p.m.)—**Home Show**, River's Edge Convention Center, 10 4th Ave. South, St. Cloud, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to discuss health care services and eligibility.

Wednesday, March 16 & April 20 (8:10-8:45 a.m.)—Listen to **Voices for Veterans Radio Show** on WJON AM 1240.

Friday, March 18 (9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.)—**VBA Benefit Day**, Fridley Community Center, 6085 7th Street NE, Fridley, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to discuss health care services and eligibility.

Calendar of Events

Friday, March 18 (9 a.m.-7 p.m.); Saturday, March 19 (10 a.m.-5 p.m.)—**Brainerd Lakes Everything Expo**, Essentia Health Sports Center, 502 Jackson Street, Brainerd, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to discuss health care services and eligibility.

Friday, March 18 & April 15 (noon-2 p.m.)—**Southwestern Minnesota Veterans Law Clinic** at the Montevideo VA Clinic. Free legal consultation for Veterans for Social Security Law, Housing, Consumer, Child Support, Family Law and Employment. No criminal issues will be discussed. Please call 320-403-1051 to schedule an appointment.

Saturday, March 19 (9 a.m.-1 p.m.)—**Community Showcase**, Rocori High School, 534 North 5th Ave. East, Cold Spring, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to discuss health care services and eligibility.

Tuesday, March 22 (10 a.m.-3 p.m.)—**Drop-In Legal Clinic Legal for Veterans**, St. Cloud VA, Building 8 (Auditorium). Free legal consultation for Veterans for Housing, Employment, Benefits, Debt Collection, Expungement, Family Law (including Child Support). For more information, contact Vetlaw Program—MACV, 651-200-4750.

Thursday, March 31 (8 a.m.-noon)—**Whitney Center Spring Wellness Fair**, Whitney Senior Center, 1527 Northway Drive, St. Cloud, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to discuss health care services and eligibility.

Saturday, April 2 (10 a.m.-3 p.m.)—**North Branch Community Connections Expo**, North Branch Area High School, 38175 Grand Avenue, North Branch, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to discuss health care services and eligibility.

Tuesday, April 5 (9-10 a.m.); Wednesday, April 20 (6-7 p.m.); or Wednesday, April 27 (2-3 p.m.)—**VA Caregiver Support Line**. Free education and support for Caregivers—right from your home phone! Topic for April is *Standing on Solid Ground: Finding Your Path Along the Challenging Road of Caregiving and Mental Illness*. To register, call Jess Behrends at 320-252-1670, ext. 7283.

Tuesday, April 5 (7-8 p.m.)—**Veteran Affairs Benefits Workshop (7-8 p.m.)**—Sauk Rapids-Rice Middle School, Rm. 106, 901 1st Street South, Sauk Rapids, MN. Please enter Door 1. The St. Cloud VA and a panel of specialists will discuss benefits and enrollment eligibility. This class is for all Veterans, whether enrolled or not at the VA. To register for this free class, visit https://isd47.cr3.schooltoday.com/public/costoption/class_id/6492/public/1/.

Calendar of Events

Friday, April 8 (4-8 p.m.); Saturday, April 9 (10 a.m.-6 p.m.)—**Eddy's Craft Fair**, Eddy's Resort, 41334 Shakopee Lake Road, Onamia, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to discuss health care services and eligibility.

Saturday, April 9 (noon-7 p.m.)—**SCSU Powwow**, St. Cloud State University, Halenbeck Hall (main gym), 720 4th Ave. South, St. Cloud, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to discuss health care services and eligibility.

Tuesday, April 12 (4:30-6:30 p.m.)—**St. Cloud Business After Hours 'Extra'**, Kelly Inn, 100 4th Ave. South, St. Cloud, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to discuss health care services and eligibility.

Wednesday, April 13 (10-11 a.m. or 1-2 p.m.)—**Advanced Care Planning (ACP)**, St. Cloud VA, Building 29, Room 20-D. Do your loved ones know how you would like to be treated if a situation arises and you are unable to speak for yourself? Is your main desire to have the most days of life or to have the most life in your days? Learn the basics of ACP and develop your own ACP with guidance from VA staff. Information on burial benefits will also be available. Veterans, families, caregivers, significant others and staff are invited to attend. Contact is Linda Schwab, 320-252-1670, ext. 6008.

Wednesday, April 20 (1:30 p.m.)—**Service of Remembrance**, St. Cloud VA Chapel. Quarterly service in remembrance of Veterans.

Saturday, April 23 (8 a.m.-3 p.m.)—**St. Cloud VA Clinical Recruitment Event**, St. Cloud VA, Building 8 (Auditorium), St. Cloud, MN. This is a clinical recruitment event for nurses and providers to learn about opportunities the VA has to offer. Bring resumes and laptops. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will also be available to discuss Veteran health care services and eligibility.

Tuesday, April 26; Wednesday, April 27; Thursday, April 28 (10 a.m.-2 p.m.)—**The Clothesline Project**, St. Cloud VA, Building 8 (Auditorium). The Clothesline Project is a way for those affected by military sexual trauma (MST) to express their emotions by decorating a shirt, which is then hung on a clothesline to be viewed by others as testimony to the problem of sexual assault. For more information or to decorate a shirt, please contact Joy Finkelson, MST Coordinator, at 320-252-1670, ext. 6398; or Julie Wolf, Program Support Assistant, at 320-252-1670, ext. 7511.

Primary Care Mental Health Integration is pleased to present:

Health Focus Fridays

WHO: All Veterans Welcome

WHAT: Classes Focus on Health and Well-Being
New Topics Every Week!

WHEN: Fridays, March 11—May 27
11 a.m.—12 p.m.
NO Appointment Needed

WHERE: Building 29, Room 20D

WHY: Learn creative strategies to improve your
health and well-being!

Wellness Topics

Friday, March 11	How to Manage Stress
Friday, March 18	How to Create Healthy Relationships
Friday, March 25	How to Set Goals (and stick to them!)
Friday, April 1	How to Improve Sleep
Friday, April 8	How to Solve Problems
Friday, April 15	How to Communicate Assertively
Friday, April 22	How to Improve Nutritional Habits
Friday, April 29	How to Increase Motivation to Exercise
Friday, May 6	How to Manage Worry
Friday, May 13	How to Talk with Medical Providers
Friday, May 20	How to Let Go of Anger & Resentment
Friday, May 27	How to Improve Pain Management

For more information, please call:
320-252-1670 ext. 7531





Weight Management: Healthy Eating

Food is your body's fuel. You can't live without it. The key is to give your body enough nutrients and energy without eating too much. Reading food labels can help you make healthy choices. Also, learn new eating habits to manage your weight.

Watch Your Serving Size

All the values on a food label are based on one serving. The serving size is the average portion, or one "helping." Try to keep to one serving. If you eat more, remember to multiply the values on the label by the number of servings you eat.

Calories Count

Go to [MOVE.gov](https://move.gov) and download their [FOOD DIARY](#).

Set a daily target calorie goal using this chart. Find your current weight in the left column. Your daily target calorie goal for that weight range is listed to the right. These calorie goals are designed to help you lose about 2 lbs per week. Limit your calories to the lower end of the range. If you find this is too low, you may increase your daily calorie goal to the higher end of the range. This should result in a ½ pound per week weight loss. You may use one

Starting Weight	Daily Calorie Goal
Under 200 lbs	1200-1500 calories per day
200-225 lbs	1500-1800 calories per day
226-250 lbs	1800-2000 calories per day
251-300 lbs	2000-2200 calories per day
301-350 lbs	2500-3000 calories per day
Over 350 lbs	Consult a MOVE! Dietitian

of the online services or buy a simple calorie counter book so you can accurately log your calories in your food diary on a daily basis. The Veterans Canteen Service store has the book *Calorie King* at a reduced price. Look for this in the MOVE! section of the store. When you make it to the next weight range (for instance, you start off at 280 lbs, and you drop down to 245 lbs with a goal of getting down to 215 lbs), you will need to reduce your daily calories to that lower level.

If you weigh over 350 lbs or you have any concerns, ask for a consultation with the VA MOVE! team dietitian to help set your daily calorie goal.

Eat Less Fat

A gram of fat has almost twice the calories of a gram of protein or carbohydrates. Try to balance your food choices so that 20% to 35% of your calories comes from total fat. This means an average of 2½ to 3½ grams of fat for each 100 calories you eat.

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Eat More Fiber

High-fiber foods are digested more slowly than low-fiber foods, so you feel full longer.

High-fiber foods have other health benefits. Try to get 31 grams of fiber each day.

Foods high in fiber include:

- Vegetables and fruits
- Whole-grain or bran breads, pastas, and cereals
- Legumes (beans) and peas

Don't Forget About Physical Activity

To be successful in managing your weight, focus on what you consume and on burning calories through increased physical activity.

More Healthy Eating Tips

- Don't skip meals. This often leads to overeating later on. It's best to spread your eating throughout the day.
- Eat a variety of foods, not just a few favorites. Adding color variety to your foods can help you take in a range of nutrients.
- If you find yourself eating when you're not hungry, ask yourself why. Many of us eat when we're bored, stressed, or just to be polite. Listen to your body. If you're not hungry, get busy doing something else instead of eating. Or, have a glass of water.
- Eat slower by taking smaller bites, setting your fork down in between bites, and chewing thoroughly before swallowing. It takes 20 minutes for your stomach to tell your brain that it's full.
- Pay attention to what you eat. Don't read or watch TV during your meal.

Use MOVE!

If you are interested in the VA's weight-management program, MOVE!, talk with your primary care team or go to the MOVE! website at www.move.va.gov.

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS: *Strive for a Healthy Weight*

Looking to lose some weight? Want to improve your health in 2016?

Check out these numbers......on your own it may not be easy, but together with your MOVE! Team, you can set a SMART goal to eat well, move more, and lose weight...You can do it! We can help!

2	18.5 to 24.9	500	150+
IMPORTANT NUMBERS			
What is your "current" weight?	The BMI "normal weight" range.	The number of calories you need to decrease from your daily diet to achieve 1 pound of weight loss per week.	Minutes of physical activity per week to maintain weight.
What is your "goal" weight?	Find your number: http://www.move.va.gov/docs/NewHandouts/Miscellaneous/M06_BMIChart.pdf		Add more minutes to lose weight.

Make some changes and do it for you...this year!

Healthy Living
Healthy Living Matters. Prevention Works.



The Clothesline Project and Overcoming Sexual Trauma *April 26 – 28, 2016*

The Clothesline Project (CLP) is a program started in Cape Cod, MA, in 1990 to address issues of Sexual Assault. It is a way for those affected by this trauma to express their emotions by decorating a shirt. The shirt is then hung on a clothesline to be viewed by others as testimony to the problem of Sexual Assault.

This visual display raises awareness of military sexual trauma, sexual trauma, and sexual abuse. Male and female Veterans design shirts that reflect their experience of sexual trauma and recovery to “Break the Silence” that can often surround these experiences. Designing a shirt allows veterans to speak up about experiences they may have previously kept silent. Completed shirts are then hung side-by-side to bear witness to the impact sexual violence has had on their lives.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is concerned about sexual violence because we know that any type of trauma can have lasting effects on a person’s physical and mental health. We also know that people can recover from trauma. The St. Cloud VAHCS is here to help!

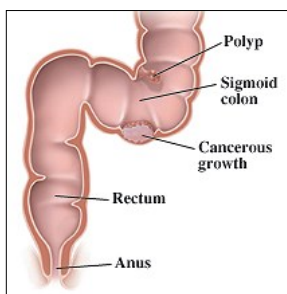
For more information on the Clothesline Project or to decorate a shirt please contact Joy Finkelson, MST Coordinator, at 320-252-1670, ext. 6398, or Julie Wolf, Program Support Assistant, at 320-252-1670, ext. 7511.

****T-shirts provided by the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars**

March: Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer in the U.S. It is also the second leading cause of cancer deaths, behind lung cancer. To put it in perspective, the yearly death toll from colorectal cancer in America exceeds the total number of American combat deaths during the entire Vietnam War. But it doesn't have to be. In the past decade, colorectal cancer has emerged as one of the most preventable common cancers. If all men and women age 50 and older were screened regularly, 6 out of 10 deaths from colorectal cancer could be prevented. Screening is typically recommended for all between the ages of 50 and 75 years. VA diagnoses some 4,000 new cases of the disease each year in Veterans.

What is colorectal cancer? Colorectal cancer is a cancer that starts in the colon (bowel) or rectum. It's as common in women as it is in men. Most colorectal cancers start with a



polyp. A polyp is a small growth and is found in many different parts of the body, including the colon. Most polyps are harmless, but some can turn into cancer. If polyps are found and removed before they turn into cancer, then many colorectal cancers can be prevented. Several screening tests detect colorectal cancer early, when it can be more easily and successfully treated. Additionally, if colorectal cancer is caught early by screening, before symptoms develop, then it can usually be cured.

What are the symptoms of colorectal cancer? In many cases, colorectal cancer may not have any symptoms. It is often found by using a screening test. But you should tell your doctor if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Changes in your bowel patterns. These can include diarrhea, constipation or a narrowing of the stool (feces) for more than a few days.
- Bleeding from your rectum or blood in your stool.
- Feeling that your bowel does not empty completely.
- Cramping, frequent gas, bloating, a feeling of fullness, or vomiting.
- Weight loss when you are not trying to lose weight.

Having these symptoms does not mean that you definitely have cancer. Many of these symptoms can be caused by other problems. You may need tests to know for sure what is causing your symptoms.

How can you prevent colorectal cancer?

- Routine colorectal cancer screening
- Stop smoking and avoid tobacco products
- Limit alcohol consumption
- Regular exercise
- Eat lots of vegetables, fruits, & whole grains; and limit intake of red meats

For questions about your need for colorectal cancer screening, please discuss this issue with your VA primary care provider. *Make this March the month you decide to get screened!*

Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC)

VA issues a Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC) to enrolled Veterans for identification and to speed the check-in process at VA medical appointments. Some enrolled Veterans have more than one VHIC that may be active. Effective February 2016 enrolled Veterans became limited to only one active VHIC. Multiple active cards increase risk for identity theft, medical harm or financial harm if the identity data is compromised.

If a card cannot be read by a scanner, kiosk or other device it is most likely not the most recent card issued. If the Veteran has no other card, they should see the VHIC clerk to request a new card. That card, once received, will become the only active card.

Deactivated cards can no longer be used and should be shredded or otherwise securely destroyed. Inactive cards may be turned in to the facility VHIC department for proper disposal (Building 1 Receptionist), or Veterans may destroy the card on their own.

Contact at the St. Cloud VA is Kari Freeman, (320) 252-1670, ext. 6570.



What's New at the St. Cloud VA?

We wanted to provide a quick update on how things are going at the St. Cloud VA.

In the face of the continuing high volume of news media reporting and political activity about the VA, here in St. Cloud we're continuing to focus on delivering quality health care to Veterans in a timely manner and with a positive experience.

St. Cloud Awarded Five Stars for Quality!

Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning Value Model or SAIL is a system for summarizing hospital system performance within Veterans Health Administration (VHA). SAIL assesses 25 Quality measures in areas such as death rate, complications, and patient satisfaction, as well as overall efficiency at individual VA Medical Centers (VAMCs). SAIL data tables are updated every quarter. Beginning in Q4, FY 15, SAIL began assigning overall Quality star-designations to the 18 hospitals that do not have acute medical/surgical inpatient care services (like St. Cloud). These ratings range from 1 to 5 stars, with 5 stars representing the top 20% of VHA facilities.



For Q4, FY 15, St. Cloud was assigned 5 stars for quality!

While the label is nice, the report shows that our team consistently provides high quality, preventive-focused health care that serves to help our Veterans remain healthy and out of the hospital.

Recruiting Efforts Making Progress

One of our continuing challenges is the recruitment of sufficient numbers of providers, in particular primary care providers. This is a long-standing issue and didn't just suddenly rise to the surface a year or two ago. Put another way, recruiting has received lots of focus and effort for many years. We've had some recent recruiting successes and wanted to share those with you:

- Since October 1, 2014, twenty-five (25) permanent physician (MD, DO) and mid-level (NP, PA) providers have been hired to improve access to Primary Care, Specialty Care, Mental Health, and Extended Care services. An additional nine (9) providers have accepted offers of employment and are scheduled to begin work in the next two months.
- For Primary Care, since October 1, 2014, one (1) physician and ten (10) mid-level providers have been hired. Additionally, two physicians and six additional mid-level providers have accepted offers. As these new hires start work, panel sizes should improve.

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The recruiting challenge keeps provider panel sizes at St. Cloud higher than the VHA average. This is recognized and impacts to patients are minimized by the professionalism and great work of our excellent medical staff, by effective appointment management, and by insisting on quality work and keeping a clear focus on patient safety.

Wait Times

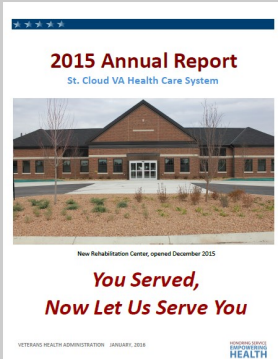
Patient wait times remain good—St. Cloud patients are routinely seen in accordance with established guidelines. In December, 2015, we conducted 34,366 patient appointments. Of those, 33,265 appointments, or almost 97%, were completed within 30 days. On average, a primary care patient waited a little over 4 days to complete an appointment. In specialty care clinics, a patient waited almost 8 days; and in mental health a patient waited just over 4 days to complete an appointment. We recognize that these are averages and don't reflect every Veteran's experience. We'll keep working towards reducing and eliminating waits.

VHA wait times are publicly reported monthly at: <http://www.va.gov/health/access-audit.asp>.

Mediation

As you are aware, we are engaged in mediation as a method to bridge the perceived communications gap between management and the local union. The first mediation session occurred on January 12-14, with another session planned for mid-March. For more information see: <https://www.fmcs.gov/mediators-report-progress-in-labor-management-relations-at-st-cloud-mn-veterans-facility/>.

We know we can make improvements in several areas, and we will work to do so while staying focused on taking great care of Veterans.



For more highlights, click [here](#) to see the St. Cloud VA Health Care System 2015 Annual Report.

Advanced Care Planning (ACP) Conference

In considering healthcare treatment decisions, your personal values are key. Do your loved ones know how you would like to be treated if a situation arises and you are unable to speak for yourself? Is your main desire to have the most days of life, or to have the most life in your days?

Your decisions about how to handle health situations could be different at age 40 than at age 85. Or they could be different if you have an incurable condition as opposed to being generally healthy. ACP allows you to provide instructions for these types of situations and then to change the instructions as you get older or if your viewpoint changes. ACP is for everyone.

Who: Veterans, families, caregivers, significant others and staff are invited to attend

What: Educational presentation on the basics of ACP and the opportunity to develop your own ACP with guidance from VA staff. Information on burial benefits will be available.

Where: Building 29 Room 20-D on the St Cloud VA campus

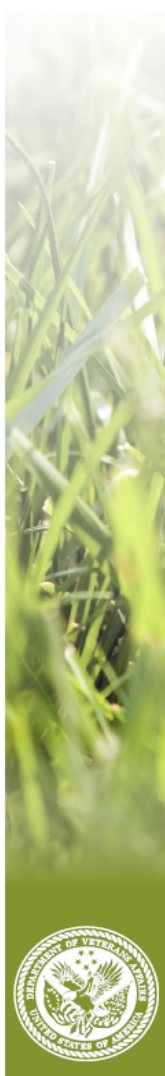
When: Wed April 13, 2016

Time: 10AM-11AM and repeated 1PM-2PM. VA staff will be available following each presentation to answer your questions and assist with developing your own ACP if desired

Objectives: By attending this conference you will be able to:

1. Define terminology used in ACP
2. Understand the benefits and importance of ACP
3. Develop an awareness of available resources to assist in the ACP process
4. Develop your own ACP with VA staff assistance if desired





The National Disabled Veterans — TEE TOURNAMENT —

What: A week of various activities designed to assist the disabled Veteran in rehabilitation both physically and mentally. The week starts out with the Veteran golfing at one of five courses in the Iowa City area. Mid-week the Veterans participate in many activities in addition to golf and golf lessons. The activities can include bowling, kayaking, horseback riding, fishing to name a few.

Wednesday evening is "Wellness Night" with a number of booths set up to educate the Veteran and companions. The evening is set up to not only educate but to encourage Veterans to get to know each other. Sponsors donate prizes for those Veterans that visit booths and entertainment is enjoyed by all.

The week finishes up with a golf tournament on Thursday with prizes for closest to the pin, longest drive, and longest putt. The team with the best score also gets a prize!! Thursday evening everyone participates in closing ceremonies in which we recognize the participants, volunteers and sponsors for a successful event!

When: **SEPTEMBER 12 - 16, 2016**

Where: Golf events will take place at various courses located in the Iowa City area. Bowling events will take place at Colonial Bowling Lanes in Iowa City. Other alternative events are held around the Riverside Casino and Golf Resort.

Who: Participation is open to U.S. military veterans with visual impairments, amputations, traumatic brain injuries, psychological trauma, certain neurological conditions, spinal cord injuries and other disabilities.

Presented by: The Department of Veterans Affairs with the Iowa City VA Health Care System as the Host. Funded by the VA and generous donations from many sponsors.

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN BEING A SPONSOR, VOLUNTEERING
OR JUST SEEKING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT:**

**Kirt Sickels, National Disabled Veterans TEE Tournament Director,
(319) 358-5963; or by e-mail at: kirt.Sickels@va.gov, or**

**Kim Heeren, NDVTEE Program Assistant,
(319) 358-5962 or by e-mail at: kimberly.heeren@va.gov**

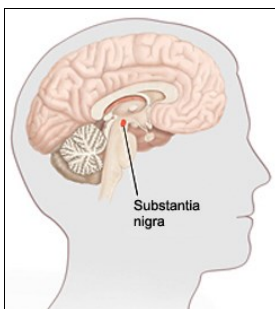
Applications are being accepted for the
2016 National Disabled Veterans TEE Tournament until June 1.

www.tee.va.gov

Parkinson's Disease

April is Parkinson's Awareness Month. Parkinson's disease is a condition that affects control over your movements. It's caused by a lack of dopamine, a chemical that helps the nerve cells in your brain communicate with each other. When dopamine is missing from certain areas of the brain, the messages that tell your body how to move are lost or distorted. This can lead to symptoms such as shaking, stiffness, and slow movement. There's no cure for Parkinson's disease. But proper treatment can help ease symptoms and allow you to live a full, active life.

Changes in the Brain. Dopamine is produced in a small area of the brain called the substantia nigra. For reasons that aren't yet clear, the nerve cells in this region that make dopamine begin to die. This means less dopamine is available to help control your movements. When healthy, the substantia nigra makes enough dopamine to help control your body's movements. With Parkinson's, nerve cells in the substantia nigra die. Less dopamine is made to help control your movements. Most often, Parkinson's disease develops after the age of 50. But it can affect younger people as well.



Symptoms of Parkinson's Disease

Parkinson's symptoms often appear gradually. Some may take years to develop. Others you may not have at all. Below are the most common:

- **Shaking (resting tremor)** can affect the hands, arms, and legs. Most often, the shaking is worse on one side of the body. It usually lessens when the limb is used.
- **Slow movement (bradykinesia)** can affect the whole body. Persons may walk with short, shuffling steps. They can also feel "frozen" and unable to move.
- **Stiffness (rigidity)** occurs when muscles don't relax. It can cause muscle aches and stooped posture.
- **Other symptoms** include balance problems, small handwriting, soft voice volume, constipation, reduced or "flat" facial expression, and sleep problems. Memory loss or other problems with thinking may also occur.

How Is Parkinson's Diagnosed? There is no single test for Parkinson's disease. The diagnosis is based on your symptoms, medical history, and a physical exam. You'll also have tests to help rule out other problems. These may include blood tests to look for diseases that cause similar symptoms. They can also include brain-imaging tests, such as an MRI.

Parkinson's Disease or Parkinsonism?

Parkinsonism is the name for a group of brain conditions that all have symptoms similar to Parkinson's disease. However, the causes of these symptoms are different. In some cases, Parkinson's-type symptoms may result from strokes or head injury. They can also be caused by medications or other diseases that affect the brain. In general, these conditions cannot be treated as well using the medications that help people with Parkinson's disease.

A Recipe for Health

Shredded French Dip **(Slow Cooker Recipe)**

Ingredients

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 (3-lb.) boneless beef chuck
roast, trimmed | 1 (10½-oz.) can condensed low-
sodium beef broth, undiluted |
| 1 (10½-oz) can condensed low-
sodium French onion soup, undiluted | 1 tsp. beef bouillon granules |
| 1 (10½-oz.) can condensed low-
sodium beef consommé, undiluted | 8-10 French or Italian rolls, split |

Directions

Halve roast and place in slow cooker. Combine the soup, consommé, broth and bouillon; pour over roast. Cover and cook on low for 6-10 hours or until meat is tender. Remove meat and shred with 2 forks. Serve on rolls. Skim fat from cooking juices and serve as dipping sauce. Makes 8-10 servings.

Nutritional Information

619 calories, 34.6g fat, 53g protein, 661mg sodium, 19.6g sodium



Take care of your buddy!

Help a fellow Veteran enroll
for VA healthcare.

Contact your County Veteran
Service Officer, call the St.
Cloud VA at 320-255-6340,
or apply online at

www.1010ez.med.va.gov

www.facebook.com/StCloudVAHCS



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